Ephesus in 1911---How This Ancient City of Diana Has Been Excavated by Austrians---Site of Temple Now a Mud Puddle

INSIDE THE THEATRE, WHICH SEATED 30,000 SPECTATORS.

BY FRANK G. CARPENTER.

Ephesus.

Come with me for a walk through the remains of the famed city of the Ephesians. We shall wander over the site of the great Temple of Diana, tramp the ground where St. John was living when he wrote his gospel, and stand in the marble market where St. Paul preached. There is also a tradition that the mother of our Lord was buried here, and that here lies the dust of St. Timothy.

Excavated by the Austrians.

The Ephesus of the past has been recently brought to the light of the present by the excavations of the Austrians. They are among the great historical explorers of the day. I have told you what they are doing in the Holy Land, and especially on the site of old Jerico. They are also engaged in digging up the ruins of other cities in Asia, and here at Ephesus they have recently uncovered the site of the Temple of Diana, and have opened up a theatre which had seats for 30,000 persons. They have been excavating the great marble docks which led to the city, and have done much to show us what this great commercial centre of 2,000 years ago must have been in the height of its glory.

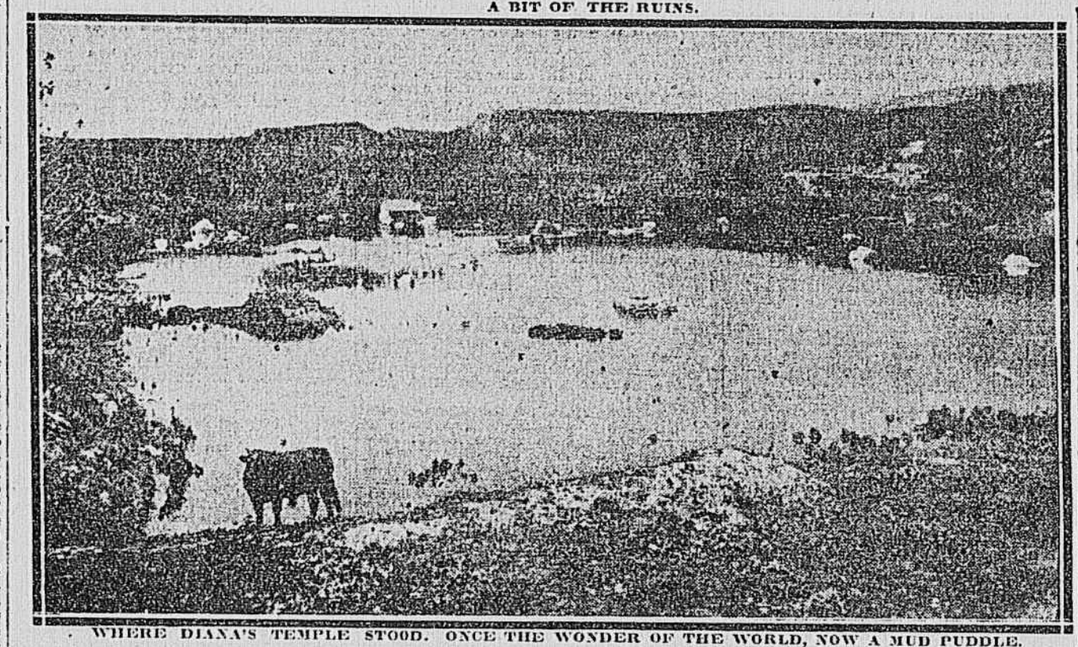
But first let me tell you something of the Ephesus of the days of St. Paul. It lay here on the coast of Asia Minor, just opposite Greece, and in what was almost the centre of the then known world. It was the chief Roman city of Asia. It had a population of a million or more and was famous for its learning, art and beautiful buildings. It was far above Smyrna, which was founded before it, and in which it is said the poet Homer was born.

Ephesus dates back to a thousand years before Christ. Some say it was started by the Amazons, but we know that it was largely built up by the Greeks, who came from the Ionic Islands over the way. It was a great city in the days of Croesus, who besieged the town 540 B. C., and later was so famous that Alexander the Great wanted to change its name for his own.

The Temple of Diana.

Among the greatest wonders of Ephesus was its temple to Diana, its favorite goddess. People from everywhere came here to worship her, and her temple was considered one of the seven wonders of the world. It covered more than two acres, and its mighty roof was upheld by 127 marble columns, each as high as a six-story house. The worship of the goddess was so famous that a business grew up in making statues of her and portable shrines which could be carried away by tourists and pilgrims. Athletic games were connected with the worship, and the month of May was sacred to her. The temple itself is referred to in the Scriptures; and in the Acts we read of "the great goddess Diana, whom Asia and all the world worshipped."

A BIT OF THE RUINS.



WHERE DIANA'S TEMPLE STOOD. ONCE THE WONDER OF THE WORLD, NOW A MUD PUDDLE.

But come let us have a look at the site of that temple to-day. We have taken a special car at Symrna and have been carried by a little French locomotive over the railroad to the station at Ayasoluk, which is forty-eight miles away across country. We have gone through a land of vineyards and olives, where baggy trousered peasants are pruning the vines and working the fields. They dig about the trees with three tined hoes, and till their crops with donkeys and bullocks. The plows are one-handled and about the same as those used in ancient days. We go over the plains which must have fed the Ephesians, wind our way in and out through the hills, and finally come to a little station, where we get horses, which carry us out over the valley to Ephesus.

Now a Mud Puddle.

The site of the temple is surrounded by hills. It lies in the valley not far above the level of the Mediterranean, which we can see shining in the sun not more than five miles away. History says it was swampy and that the great structure was erected upon columns. This statement is borne out by the present. The excavation made in removing the ruins is now filled with water. It is a mud puddle or miniature lake filled with broken pillars and capitals lying half in and half out of the water. We stand on the banks beside fluted columns of snow-white marble, and see broken marble everywhere near. That man who plows on the southern ridge of the sand turns up marble bits at every step of his bullocks, and the girls behind him, who are planting, uncover stones from the temple at almost every stroke of their hoes.

As we look we see no sign of activity which prevailed here 2,000 years ago. Birds fly across the lake and sing in the trees which bend over it. A stork sleepily sits on a marble rock in its midst and a frog croaks out a welcome. A red cow is grazing there on the edge of the water, and at my right a hog is rooting in the debris.

A Theatre Which Seated 30,000.

Now let us take horses and ride on down the valley to visit the theatre. This has been so uncovered by the Austrians that we can sit on the marble benches and look at the stage which once held the actors of the chief playhouse of Asia. Think of a theatre which would seat 30,000! We have nothing like that in the United States, and there is none that I know of in any part of the world. The wigwams of our national conventions, thrown up for the time, have accommodated that many, but this great open-air structure was built largely of marble and altogether of stone. The entrance to the stage was by tunnels, and the stage was upheld by marble columns. The seats were built of common stone, covered with marble, and they ran around the stage, or rather the pit, in the shape of a half-moon, rising high up the hills at the back. I should say there were 200 feet of such seats. They were in three stories and contained sixty-six rows.

I measured the outline of the stage. It was about eighteen feet wide and six or seven feet high. There are long underground passages leading to it, and it had eight two-storied rooms, which were probably used as dressing rooms by the actors. I walked through the pit, which is now filled with marble columns and blocks of marble, beautifully carved, and then climbed up the seats from tier to tier, sitting down now and then and trying to imagine the audience and the acting as going on upon the marble stage far below.

In Ancient Ephesus.

Leaving the theatre, having tied my horse to a bush, I strolled about through the wide streets of marble, which have been partially uncovered, and made photographs of bits of the ruins. There is enough marble here to build a structure equal to our national Capitol at Washington, and this is mixed with mosaic and the broken statues of the palaces of the past. There are pieces of friezes, columns and capitals lying out in the open; there are torsos of statues, the heads and feet of which have been broken off and carried away, and also exquisite carvings which would be treasures to any museum. Here lies a piece of marble drapery, the remains of a goddess; there the broken-up limb of an athlete, and farther on an exquisite bit from the front of the temple.

OUR CONSUL AND HIS KAVASSES.

Among the ruins are the remains of stores, houses and markets. I climbed over marble blocks along the street which led to the ship canal, and stood among shattered columns in what was once the stock exchange and wool market. In one place is an artificial terrace, on which stood the great gymnasium, and in another a market place 200 feet long, surrounded by a portico, back of which were halls, in which the marketmen stood. In the mosaic floors of these halls thirteen different kinds of marbles were used, and marbles of various colors were employed in the structure.

Farming the Ruins.

To-day the peasants are working all over these ruins. Here they are planting grain and there cleaning the fields, a gang of a dozen girls working under a turbaned man, in full, baggy trousers. Here women are digging, and farther on a man drives a camel harnessed to a one-handled plow.

The only town near Ephesus is Ayasalouk, which has a few hundred inhabitants. It has, perhaps, a dozen small stores, a railroad station and a hotel. While at the station I saw a white, fat-tailed lamb awaiting shipment. It was tied to the platform, and a card fastened to one horn bore the name of the commission merchant in Smyrna to whom it was consigned.

Running past the hotel are seven high columns, which once supported the aqueduct which supplied Ephesus with water. Each of these has now a stork's nest on its top, and the great birds may be seen any day standing there. Each stork supports itself on one leg. I am told that they come here only for the winter, and that they leave every spring for Holland, or, perhaps, for some other far-away part of the world, each transporting a baby.

In Smyrna.

I spent a day in Smyrna before coming to Ephesus, and I shall return there to go on to Constantinople and Greece. Smyrna is the largest city in Asia Minor, and it has about the same position here now that Epheaus held. It is the chief port of this part of the Levant, and does a big business in shipping wool, wine, grapes, olives and figs. It has a foreign trade of about $50,000,000 a year, and steamers from all parts of the Mediterranean come to its docks.

The city lies at one end of the great Gulf of Smyrna, which is thirty-four miles long and surrounded by silver-gray mountains, some of which are a mile high. Its harbor is excellent. The town begins on the shore, with the slopes of Pagus in the rear. It is largely composed of modern buildings, and among its people there are more Greeks than Turks. They are shrewd traders, and just now are alive to the possibilities of doing business under the new Turkish government, which promises to be far more liberal in matters of trade than that of the past.

Smyrna is much interested in the railroad projects for the development of Turkey, and the Germans are alive to the securing of mineral and other concessions. The various roads planned to reach Persia will open up Asia Minor, and there will be considerable demand for American goods. The same conditions prevail in Syria; and the United States should wake up to the possibilities which may come with the reorganization of this empire. A great part of Turkey is practically undeveloped, and if an honest government is to take the place of the corrupt rule of the past, the population will rapidly increase in numbers and wealth, and there will be a demand for foreign goods of all kinds.

American Opportunities in Syria.

While traveling in Syria I saw many openings for American goods. The farming there is after the methods of centuries ago, and our plows, reapers and other agricultural machines might be sold. I understand that the more progressive of the native landlords are ready to buy. One man, who owns more than a thousand acres of rich grain land on the high plateau between the two ranges of the Lebanon mountains, has offered to lease it to any American company who will cultivate it for two or three years at 75 per cent. of the profits, and will bring in American machinery for the purpose. The landlord also agrees to pay for the machinery at the regular price upon the termination of the contract.

Some of the Syrian farmers are now using American threshers and reapers, and some are bringing in American plows. The first thresher imported was upon the advice of G. Bie Ravndal, our consul-general at Constantinople. Mr. Ravndal is a Dakota man, who understands the farming conditions in the Northwest. He tells me that the possibilities of grain raising in this part of the world are remarkable, and that dry farming might be practiced in many localities which now go to waste. He thinks that old Mesopotamia can be redeemed by irrigation, and a new Egypt created there. He says the new governmental conditions point to a revolution along many lines of industry and commerce, and that American capital should take advantage of the situation.

Raw Silk From Syria.

Syria and Asia Minor are now raising a great deal of silk; which is sent to France and shipped from there to the United States. The American residents tell me that there is no reason that we should not buy this raw silk direct, and thus save the Frenchman's profits and the double transportation charges. I saw mulberry orchards everywhere during my travels in Syria. The plains about Beirut are covered with them, and they are to be found on both sides of the Lebanon Mountains. The trees grow to the height of a man's head, and are then cut back. Their branches are cut off every year, and the green leaves from the new sprouts form the food for millions of silk worms. In coming from Damascus I saw women and children picking the leaves to feed the worms, carrying them to sheds erected for the purpose. Rearing the silk worms is largely in the hands of the women. They take care of the trees and sell the cocoons, this forming the chief source of their pin money.

Money in Olives.

"He who plants an olive tree lays up riches for children's children." This saying is a current belief throughout the Levant. The olive crop is the money crop of a great part of Palestine, Syria and Asia Minor. Many of the trees are hundreds of years old and some of them were planted before Columbus discovered America. Mr. Ravndal tells of an orchard near Tripoli, in Syria, which the papers show was established about 500 years ago, and he says the trees are still bearing. All the way from Jerusalem to the Sea of Galilee I saw olive trees which looked old enough to have been planted by Jacob, and some of gigantic size, which were hollow and had been filled with stones to aid in their support.

Many of the German colonies of the Holy Land have set out new orchards, and the Americans who live at Haifa by careful cultivation have brought their trees into bearing fruit every year. I am told that the crop is very profitable, and that under the new government and reduced taxation many more trees will be planted. The fruit is raised for the oil, of which a ton of olives yields about seventy gallons, worth $136. Asiatic Turkey already leads the world in its production of olive oil, having about two or three hundred thousand more barrels per annum than either Spain or Italy.

Smyrna Figs.

Another important crop of the region about Smyrna is the fig, which grows better here than in almost any other part of the world. In some years over 300,000 camel-loads are raised, and they are shipped all over the world. The trees begin to bear in their sixth year, and are at their best ten years after planting. The figs ripen about the first of August, and when fully matured fall to the ground. They are dried in the sun, and then packed in bags for the market.

A great many of these figs go to America, and you will find them in all our grocery stores. Our part of the crop is carefully packed, there being several American firms here who do nothing else. The figs are first sorted according to the thickness of the skin and size of the fruit. The poorest are thrown away or used for distilling purposes, and the best are put up for export in boxes and jars. The price here is from 2 to 8 cents a pound, the very finest of the figs bringing the latter.

A great deal of the packing is done in the city of Smyrna, the fruit being brought in from all parts of the country. Some of it comes on the railways, or cars especially built for the traffic, and some is carried on camels. It is important that the fruit be not bruised, and that carried in the cars is laid upon shelves which are placed one above the other, so that there is no danger of the figs being mashed.

(Copyright, 1911, by Frank G. Carpenter.)